UNITED NATIONS FOCUS

UNITED NATIONS ROLE IN THE DEMOBILIZATION OF THE NICARAGUAN RESISTANCE

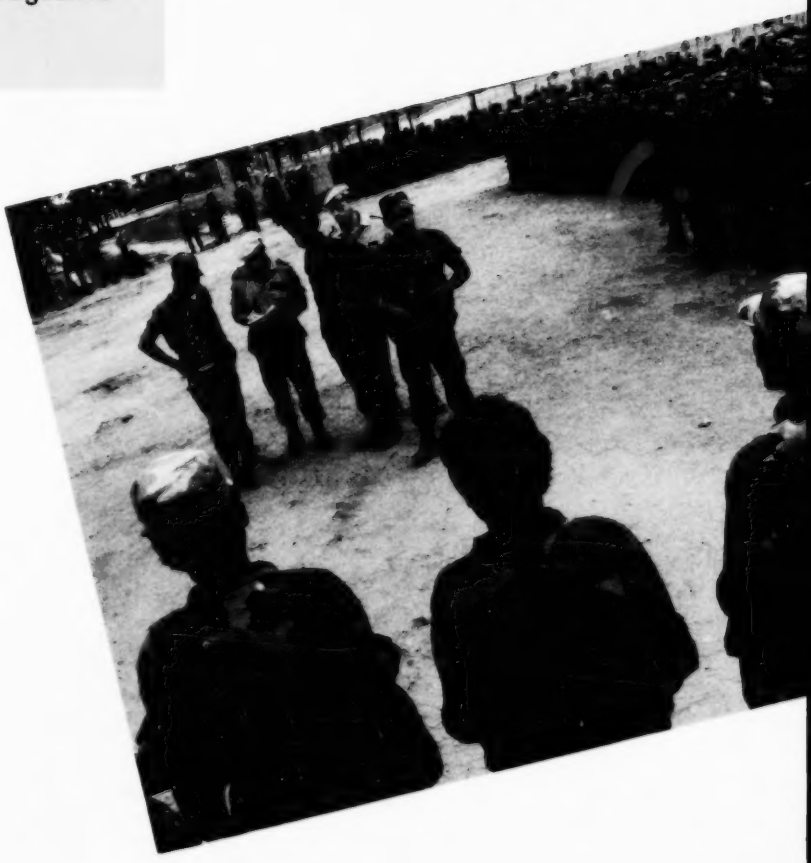
UNITED NATIONS

READEX FICHE

ONUCA

The task recently undertaken by the United Nations' youngest peace-keeping operation, the UN Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA), was without precedent in UN history. ONUCA's mission—the demobilization of the Nicaraguan resistance—involved the physical destruction of arms and military equipment voluntarily handed over by combatants.

Between 16 April and 29 June 1990 some 22,000 members of the Nicaraguan resistance were demobilized.



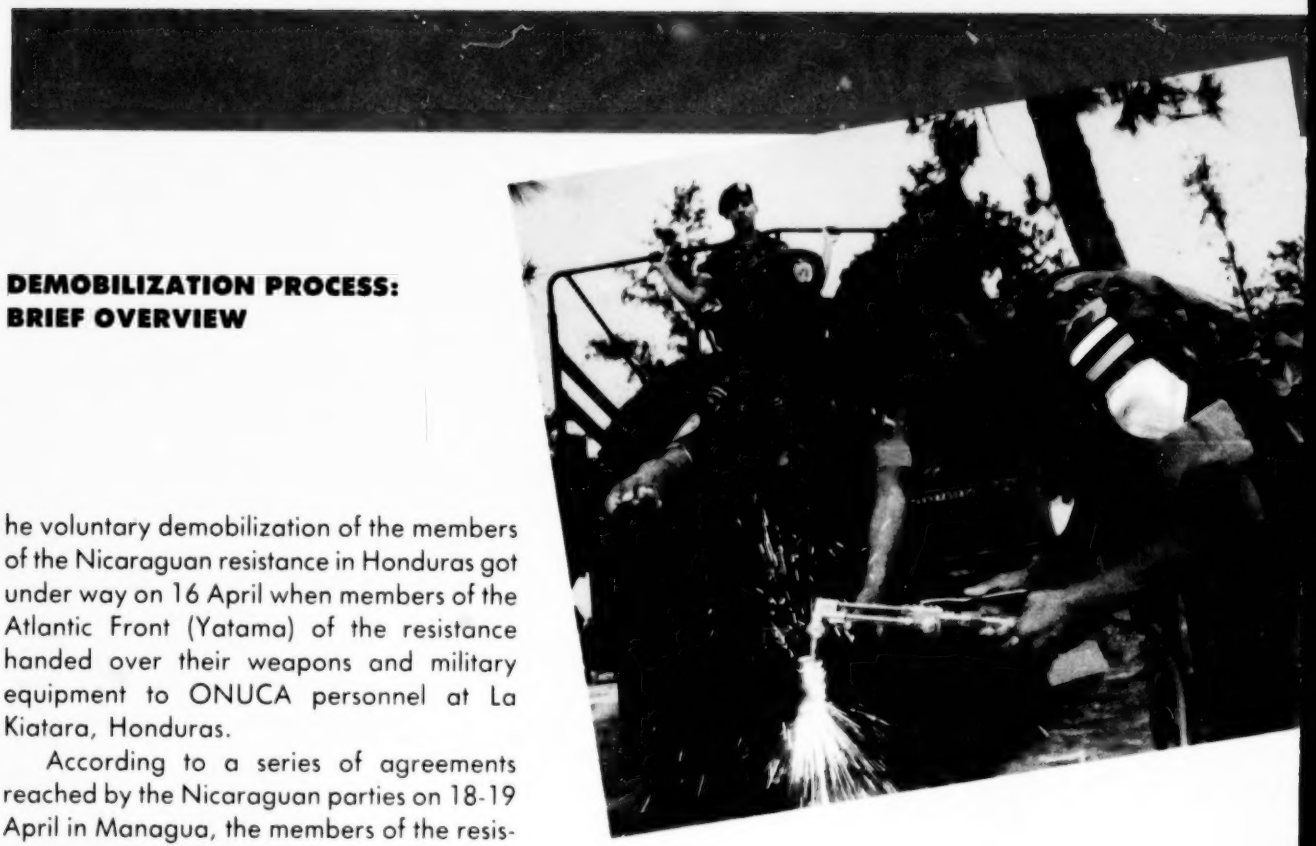
ONUCA'S MANDATE

ONUCA was originally established by the Security Council on 7 November 1989 following a series of requests from the five Central American Governments* to verify these countries' compliance with their pledges to cease aid to irregular forces and insurrectionist movements in the region and not to allow their territory to be used for attacks on other States.

On 27 March 1990, the Security Council authorized an enlargement of the mandate of ONUCA and the addition of armed personnel to its strength in order to enable it to play a part in the voluntary demobilization of the Nicaraguan resistance. On 20 April 1990, the Council authorized a further expansion of the mandate to enable ONUCA to monitor a cease-fire which had come into effect in Nicaragua and the separation of forces expected to result from the withdrawal of Nicaraguan Government troops from certain areas in the country. ONUCA, which originally had been composed only of unarmed military observers, was temporarily enlarged to include a 700-strong battalion from Venezuela, which was deployed in eight "security zones" (see map) to where the members of the Nicaraguan resistance were to proceed to be demobilized. It had been agreed that the weapons of the members of the resistance would be received by ONUCA which would destroy them *in situ*.

* Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua.

NICARAGUA
HONDURAS
COSTA RICA
CARIBBEAN SEA
PACIFIC OCEAN
NICARAGUA
LAGO de NICARAGUA
REGION I
REGION II
REGION III
REGION IV
REGION V
REGION VI
REGION VII
REGION VIII
REGION IX
NUEVA SEGOVIA
MADRIZ
CHONTALES
CARAZO
Ocotal
Wiwili
Jalapa
Condega
Estelí
Jinotega
Matagalpa
Matiguás
Muy Muy
Sébaco
Chinandega
Corinto
Ponelova
León
La Paz Centro
Nagarote
Puerto Sandino
MANAGUA
Tipitapa
Masaya
Granada
El Carmen
Diriamba
Jinotepe
Masachapa
Nandaime
Casares
Rivas
San Juan del Sur
Juigalpa
Santo Tomás
Santo Domingo
Camoapa
Boaco
San Benito
Acoyapa
San Ubaldo
Morrito
Isla de Ometepe
Alta Gracia
Peñas Blancas
Cabo Santa Elena
La Constancia
Bonanza
Rosita
Siuna
Puerto Cabezas
Waspam
Bilwaskarma
Limbaika
Prinzapolka
Makantaka
La Cruz de Río Grande
Bluefields
El Bluff
El Rama
Corn Island
Punta de Perlas
Nueva Guinea
Monkey Point
San Carlos
San Juan del Norte
Río Coco
Río Wawa
Río Kukalaya
Río Prinzapolka
Río Tuma
Río Grande de Matagalpa
Río Kurinwás
Río Escondido
Río Rama
Río Punta Gorda
Río San Juan
Golfo de Fonseca
Río Grande
Estero Real
Potosí
Chichigalpa
Lago de Managua
Tipitapa
Diriamba
Jinotepe
Masachapa
Nandaime
Casares
Rivas
Isla de Ometepe
Alta Gracia
Peñas Blancas
Cabo Gracias a Dios
Cayos Miskitos
Islas del Maíz
Monkey Point
Río Coco
Río Rocky
Río Wawa
Río Kukalaya
Río Prinzapolka
Río Tuma
Río Grande de Matagalpa
Río Kurinwás
Río Escondido
Río Rama
Río Punta Gorda
Río San Juan
Río Sapoá
Río Negro
Río Frío
Río Sarapiquí
Río Colorado
Río Sixaola
Río Chirripó
Río Pacuare
Río Reventazón
Río Parismina
Río Tortuguero
Río Sucio
Río Bebedero
Río Tempisque
Río Bolsón
Río Nosara
Río Ora
Río Nicoya
Río Tamarindo
Río Corobicí
Río Abangares
Río Lagarto
Río Grande de Tárcoles
Río Virilla
Río Pirrís
Río Savegre
Río Naranjo
Río Térraba
Río Coto Colorado
Río Coto
Río Sierpe
Río Esquinas
Río Corcovado
Río Tigre
Río Grande de Térraba
Río Chiriquí Viejo
Río Sereno
Río Caño



DEMOBILIZATION PROCESS: BRIEF OVERVIEW

The voluntary demobilization of the members of the Nicaraguan resistance in Honduras got under way on 16 April when members of the Atlantic Front (Yatama) of the resistance handed over their weapons and military equipment to ONUCA personnel at La Kiatara, Honduras.

According to a series of agreements reached by the Nicaraguan parties on 18-19 April in Managua, the members of the resistance inside Nicaragua were to be demobilized during the period from 25 April to 10 June. During the first three weeks of May, however, the pace of demobilization was very slow. On 23 May, the Security Council expressed its concern at this, noting that the process must be accelerated if the deadline of 10 June was to be met. Following a further agreement signed by the Nicaraguan parties on 29-30 May, the "Managua Protocol on Disarmament", the rate of demobilization increased substantially and proceeded regularly during the first week of June. Despite this increase, however, the deadline could not be met. On 8 June, the Security Council, on the recommendation of the Secretary-General, agreed to extend the tasks entrusted to ONUCA in relation to the demobilization process, specifying that these tasks would lapse with the completion of the process not later than 29 June.

Between 16 April and 29 June 1990, 22,000 members of the Nicaraguan resistance were demobilized in Honduras and Nicaragua, following which each was given a certificate of demobilization. Their weapons were destroyed by ONUCA in the security zones (see photos). The civilian aspects of the demobilization—repatriation, relocation or resettlement—of the members of the resistance and their families were the responsibility of CIAV (International Support and Verification Commission), a co-operative effort of the United Nations and the Organization of American States.

Following the completion of the demobilization process in Nicaragua, the Venezuelan battalion is being withdrawn and ONUCA will continue to carry out its mandate in Central America, as originally defined by the Security Council in November 1989.

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